

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 TRSE-00
 IO-13 SP-02 FTC-01 JUSE-00 /049 W
 -----301753Z 034421 /41
R 301806Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8388

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E.O. 11652 NA
TAGS: EAIR, FR
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: TICKET REBATING

REF: (A) STATE 312022, (B) PARIS 37415

1. RE PARA 2 REF (A), WE SENT LETTER DEC. 27 TO
RICHARDS ACKNOWLEDGING HIS TELEX OF DEC. 17 REPORTED
REF (B). WE DID SO IN ORDER NOT EXPOSE EMBASSY TO
CHARGE OF HAVING BEEN UNRESPONSIVE TO AN APPROACH
FROM AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND ALSO IN ORDER NOT TO
CLOSE THE DOOR IF RICHARDS HAD FURTHER INFO HE
WISHED IMPART ON HIS OWN. LETTER MERELY STATED
THAT MEANING OF RICHARDS' TELEX HAD NOT BEEN CLEAR
IN THE SENSE OF INDICATING PRECISELY WHAT IT WAS
HE EXPECTED EMBASSY AND CAB TO DO ON HIS BEHALF AND
ADDED THAT WE WERE AT HIS DISPOSAL SHOULD HE WISH
TO CLARIFY THE MATTER. THIS PROMPTED TELEX RESPONSE
FROM RICHARDS DEC. 29, COPY OF WHICH HE CLAIMS TO HAVE
SENT CAB. TELEX EXPRESSES SURPRISE THAT "AFTER
OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION AND MY DENUNCIATIONS
AGAINST PIA TO AIR FRANCE, IATA AND THE SEVERAL
TELEXES THAT I SENT TO WASHINGTON" MESSAGE SEEMED
NOT TO BE GETTING THROUGH. RICHARDS SAID HIS AIM
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WAS TO HAVE CAB PROSECUTE PIA "FOR THEIR REPEATED
VIOLATIONS--THAT INCLUDES CONTEMPT OF COURT."
(COMMENT: IT THUS DOES LOOK MORE AND MORE AS IF
RICHARDS SOMEHOW GOT WIND OF THE TEST TICKET PURCHASE
IN WHICH HE WAS CULPRIT AND IS RELYING ON "OFFENSE
IS BEST DEFENSE" TACTIC IN EFFORT TO COVER HIMSELF.

2. PIA DISCOUNTING CONTINUES THROUGH OTHER AGENCIES.
WE PHONED ONE AGENCY ADVERTISING LOW-COST
TRANSPORTATION IN INTERNATIONAL HERALD-TRIBUNE AND
WERE QUOTED FARE OF 1,750 FRs. ROUND TRIP PARIS-
NEW YORK, DEPARTING PARIS EVERY TUESDAY AND SATURDAY
WITH DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL TIMES IDENTICAL TO PIA
FLIGHT. WE WERE TOLD TICKET VALID FOR STAY OF UP
TO 45 DAYS IN US. AGENT SAID HE COULD NOT IDENTIFY
AIRLINE OVER THE PHONE BUT "IT IS SMALL COMPANY WITH
WHICH WE HAVE A CONTRACT."

3. WIFE OF USG OFFICIAL BASED PARIS HAD PHONED
SAME AGENCY THE DAY BEFORE, WAS QUOTED SAME TERMS
AND WAS TOLD AIRLINE WAS PIA. OF SPECIAL INTEREST,
HOWEVER, WAS FACT THAT THIS AGENCY AS WELL AS
ANOTHER ALSO ADVERTISING IN TRIBUNE OFFERED HER
DISCOUNTED FARE ON AIR FRANCE SCHEDULED SERVICE VALID
FOR ANY FLIGHT AND SUBJECT TO TWO WEEKS ADVANCE
BOOKING. ROUND TRIP AIR FRANCE FARES PARIS-NEW YORK
QUOTE BY THE TWO AGENCIES WERE 1,950 AND 2,040 FRs.
RESPECTIVELY. TWO WEEKS ADVANCE BOOKING REQUIRED.

4. AIR FRANCE DISCOUNTING IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST
APROPOS OF RECENT CONVERSATION WE HAD WITH DGAC OFFICIAL
WHO REMARKED IN PASSING THAT IN ACTIVATING ITS NEWLY
CREATED ENFORCEMENT STAFF DGAC WOULD LIKE NOTHING

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BETTER THAN TO CLAMP DOWN FIRST ON AIR FRANCE TO DEMONSTRATE TO OTHER CARRIERS THAT DGAC REALLY MEANS BUSINESS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUERY, ABOVE-MENTIONED WIFE OF USG OFFICIAL WHO PLANS TRAVEL TO USG IN JANUARY ANYWAY SAID SHE WOULD BE QUITE WILLING PARTICIPATE IN TEST TICKET OPERATION IF THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO CAB. EMBASSY CONSIDERS THIS WOULD BE EXCELLENT MEANS MOUNTING TEST TICKET OPERATION AGAINST AIR FRANCE.

6. WE LEAVE TO CAB'S DETERMINATION WHETHER THERE IS ANY INTEREST IN PURCHASE OF FURTHER PIA TEST TICKETS IN PARIS SINCE OBVIOUSLY PIA DISCOUNTING CONTINUES. EMBASSY WOULD BE PREPARED ARRANGE FOR SUCH PURCHASE IF DESIRED, WHETHER JUST FOR EVIDENCE OR FOR ACTUAL TRAVEL.

7. PANAM HAS RECEIVED TELEX FROM NEW YORK HEAD-QUARTERS INDICATING BILLING FOR PIA TEST TICKET PURCHASE AS WELL AS MERY'S EXPENSES IN US IS TO BE SUBMITTED TO CAA FOR FORWARDING TO CAB. HAS CAB LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGREED TO DEFRAY PANAM'S EXPENSES FOR THAT OPERATION?

8. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED INFORM EMBASSY WHETHER (A) CAB WISHES TEST TICKET OPERATION TO BE MOUNTED AGAINST AIR FRANCE INVOLVING ROUND TRIP TRAVEL IN JANUARY ON TEST TICKET BY WIFE OF USG OFFICIAL; (B) CAB IS INTERESTED IN PURCHASE OF FURTHER TEST TICKETS ON PIA; AND (C) EMBASSY SHOULD IN FACT FORWARD TO CAB FOR PAYMENT ANY BILLING FROM PANAM FOR RECENT PIA TEST TICKET OPERATION. IF RESPONSES TO (A) AND (B) ARE AFFIRMATIVE, CAB SHOULD MAKE FUNDS AVAILABLE.

9. PENDING RESPONSE ABOVE QUESTIONS AND SINCE DELAY IS CONVENIENT TO DGAC STAFF ANYWAY, WE ARE HOLDING UP TEMPORARILY INFORMING DGAC OF DETAILS OF RECENT PIA TEST TICKET OPERATION.
GAMMON

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